

REMENDER • CRAIG • BOYD

DEADLY CLASS™



1988

#16

The Story So Far...

When homeless orphan Marcus Lopez was asked to join Kings Dominion Atelier of the Deadly Arts, a shadowy school specializing in training the next generation of the world's deadliest assassins, he figured he had nothing left to lose. He was wrong.

Marcus wound up caught between two women, Maria, who desperately loved him, and Saya, who Marcus fell for hard. Unable to withstand Saya's dark charms, Marcus cheated on Maria and has hated himself for it ever since.

The lovers' quarrel came to a head when the family of Maria's former boyfriend, who she murdered to save Marcus's life, came for revenge. In the carnage that ensued, Marcus realized his true feelings for Maria...but it was too late. Murder and deception might be on the curriculum at Kings Dominion, but getting caught is a failure punishable by death.

Maria found this out when she sought to cover her tracks with Headmaster Lin and felt life ebbing from her body as she drank the poison tea he offered in friendship. None of her friends would know the truth of what happened to her.

In the wake of all this, Marcus has slid into a dark pit of guilt, depression, and drugs. In paranoid fever dreams he's convinced himself that it was Saya who orchestrated everything that's happened to him since he arrived at the school, including Maria's disappearance. Saya, now dating his former best friend Willie, only feeds this suspicion.

Marcus is on a bad road, burning every bridge behind him and turning his back on all his friends. A road that can only lead to one final destination...

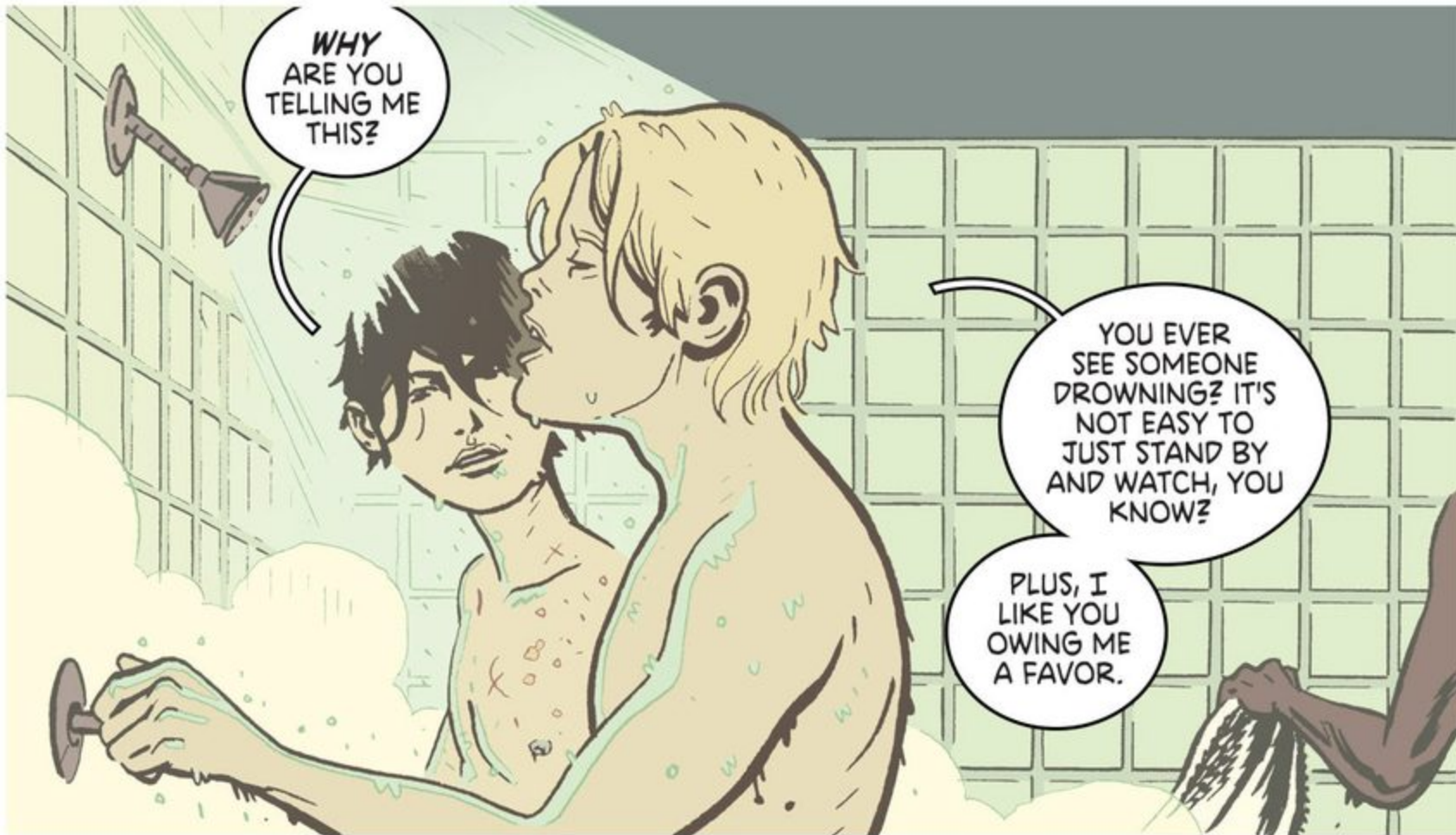
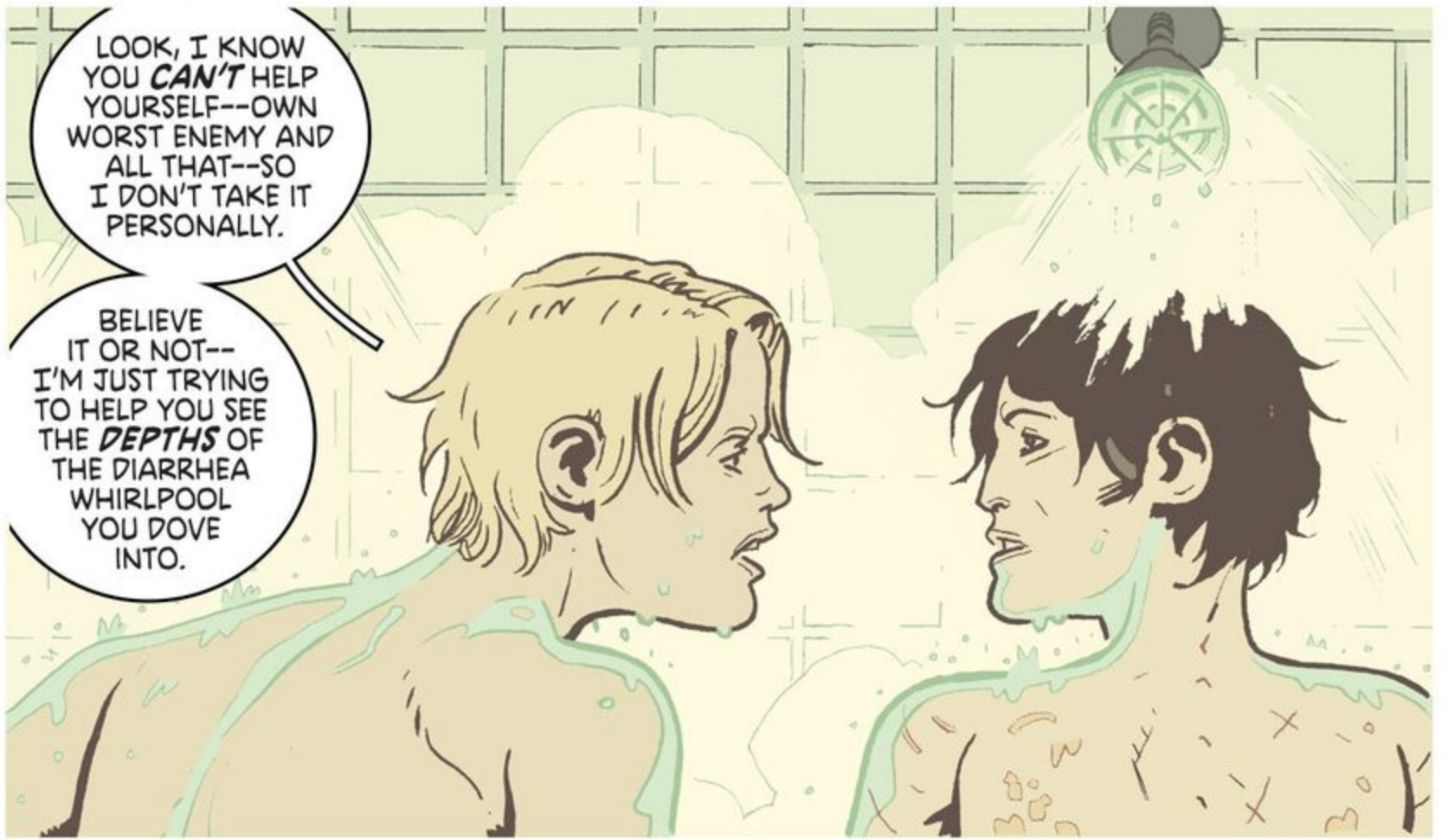
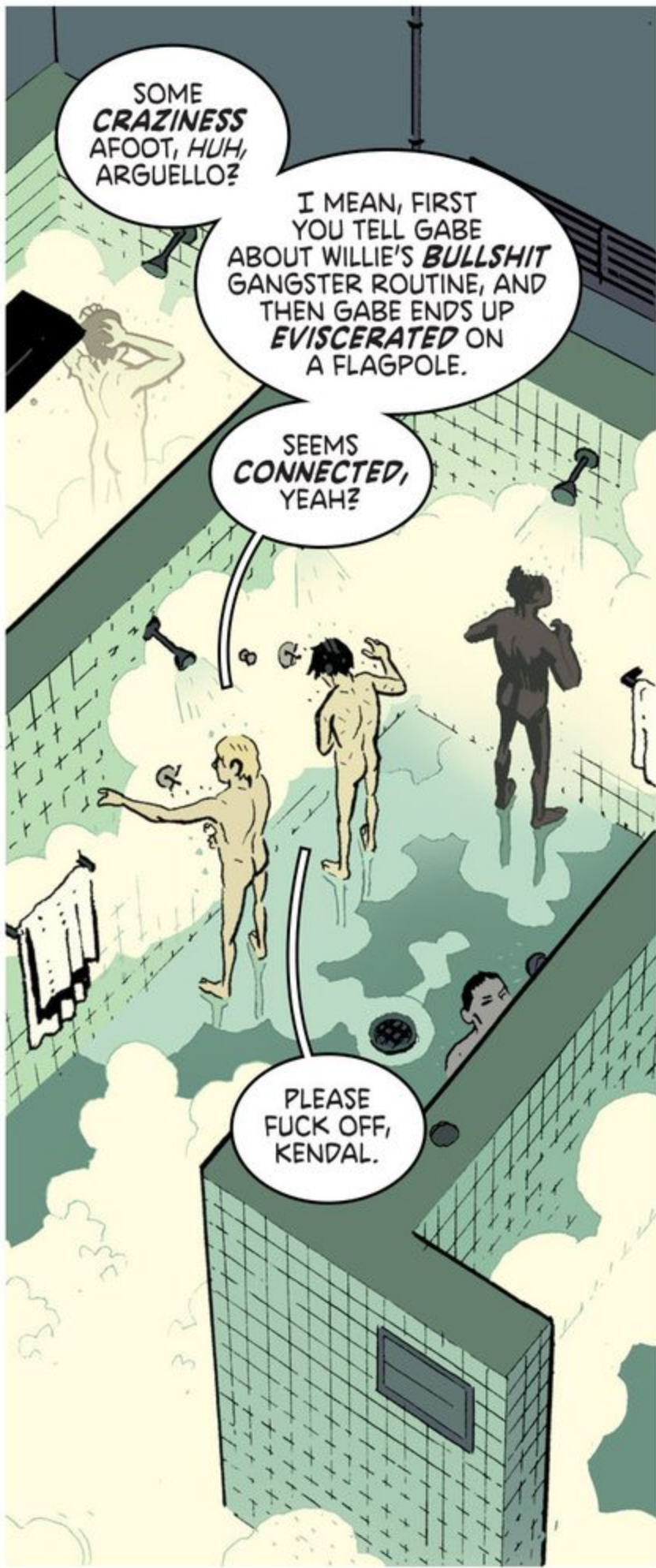
DEADLY CLASS created by Rick Remender & Wes Craig

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DEADLY CLASSES

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VIKTOR.
SHABNAM.
WILLIE AND SAYA.
HERPES.

TOO MUCH TO
DEAL WITH.



CALM DOWN.

COMPARTMENTALIZE.

BE SMART.



TAKE CARE OF ONE
PROBLEM AT A TIME.



GOD
DAMN IT! STOP
SHADOWING
ME! YOU KNOW
I SEE YOU!

I'M
SORRY,
OKAY?

I MADE A
MISTAKE. CAN'T
WE JUST... SIT
DOWN AND
TALK IT
THROUGH?



C'MON.



BE
SEEING
YOU,
MARCUS.



I, TOO,
WILL BE
SEEING
YOU.

TIME IS
ALMOST UP
TO MAKE BIG
CHOICE!

FUCK.

ONE THING AT A TIME.

ON THE MUNI OVER A SECURITY GUARD GAVE ME A "NO PROOF OF PAYMENT" TICKET.

EVERYONE TAKING SHOTS AT THE TARGET ON MY BACK.

THIS IS SOMEHOW WORSE THAN EVERY OTHER SHITTY THING.

IF THEY KILL ME, IT'S ALL OVER. BUT IF I LIVE--

HERPES.

DICK SORES.

FOREVER.

I'LL HAVE TO TELL EVERY GIRL I MEET THAT TO FUCK ME IS A TICKET TO LIFELONG VAGINAL SORES.

I'LL BE ALONE FOREVER.

ALONE WITH SORES ON MY DICK.

WOW. SHE'S CUTE.

MAYBE SHE HAS HERPES.

SHE'S OUT OF MY LEAGUE, BUT IF SHE HAS HERPES...

THAT PUTS US IN THE SAME LEAGUE!

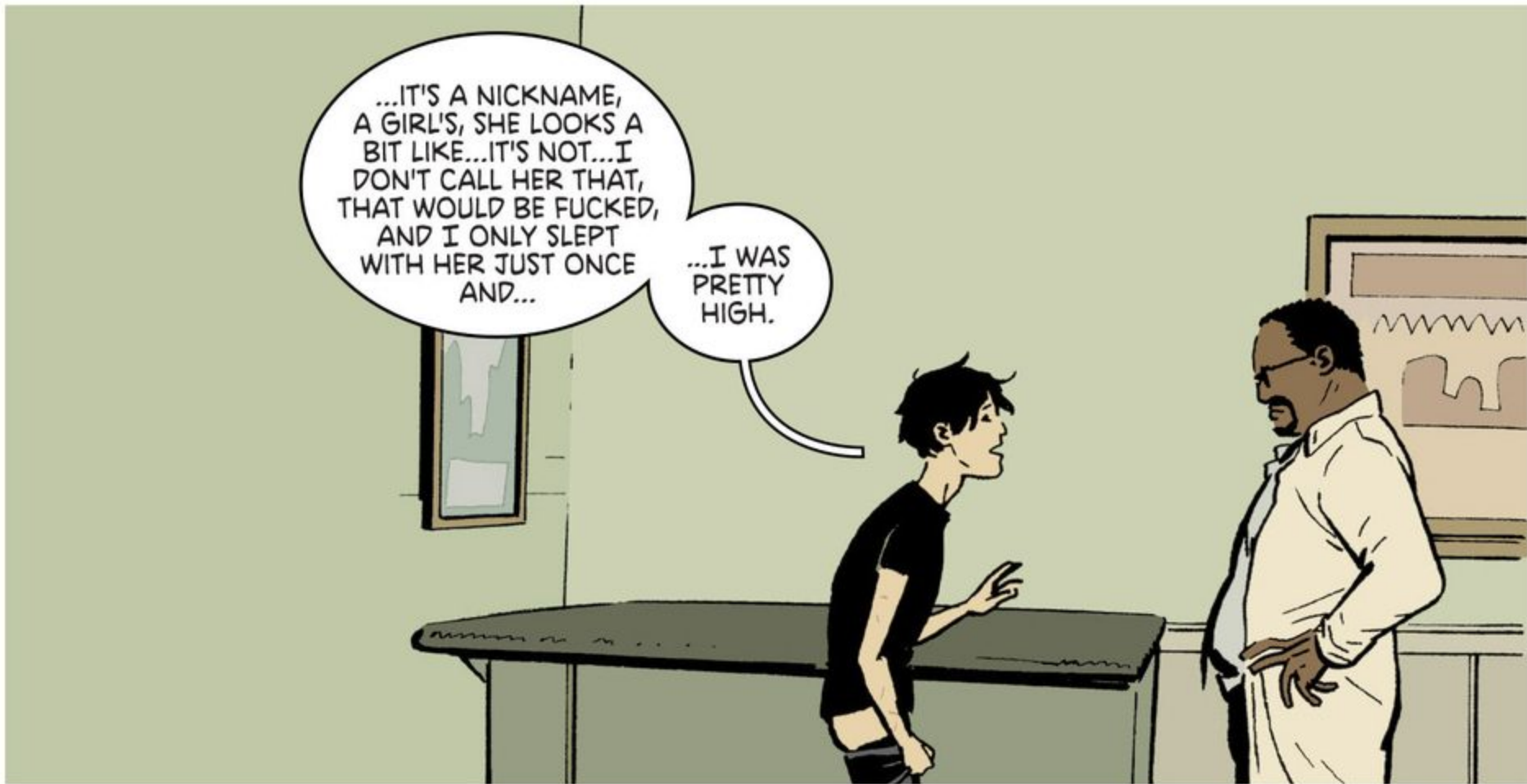
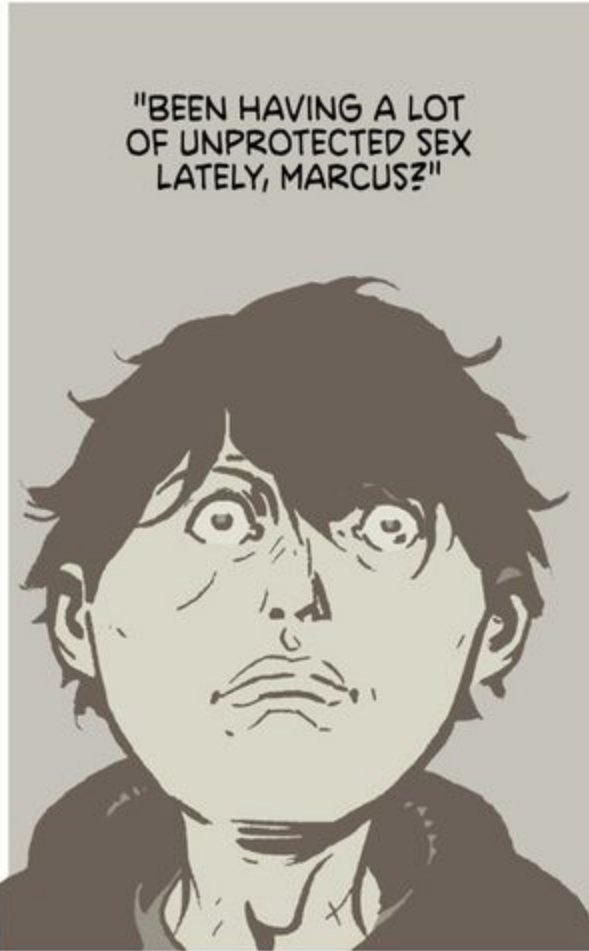
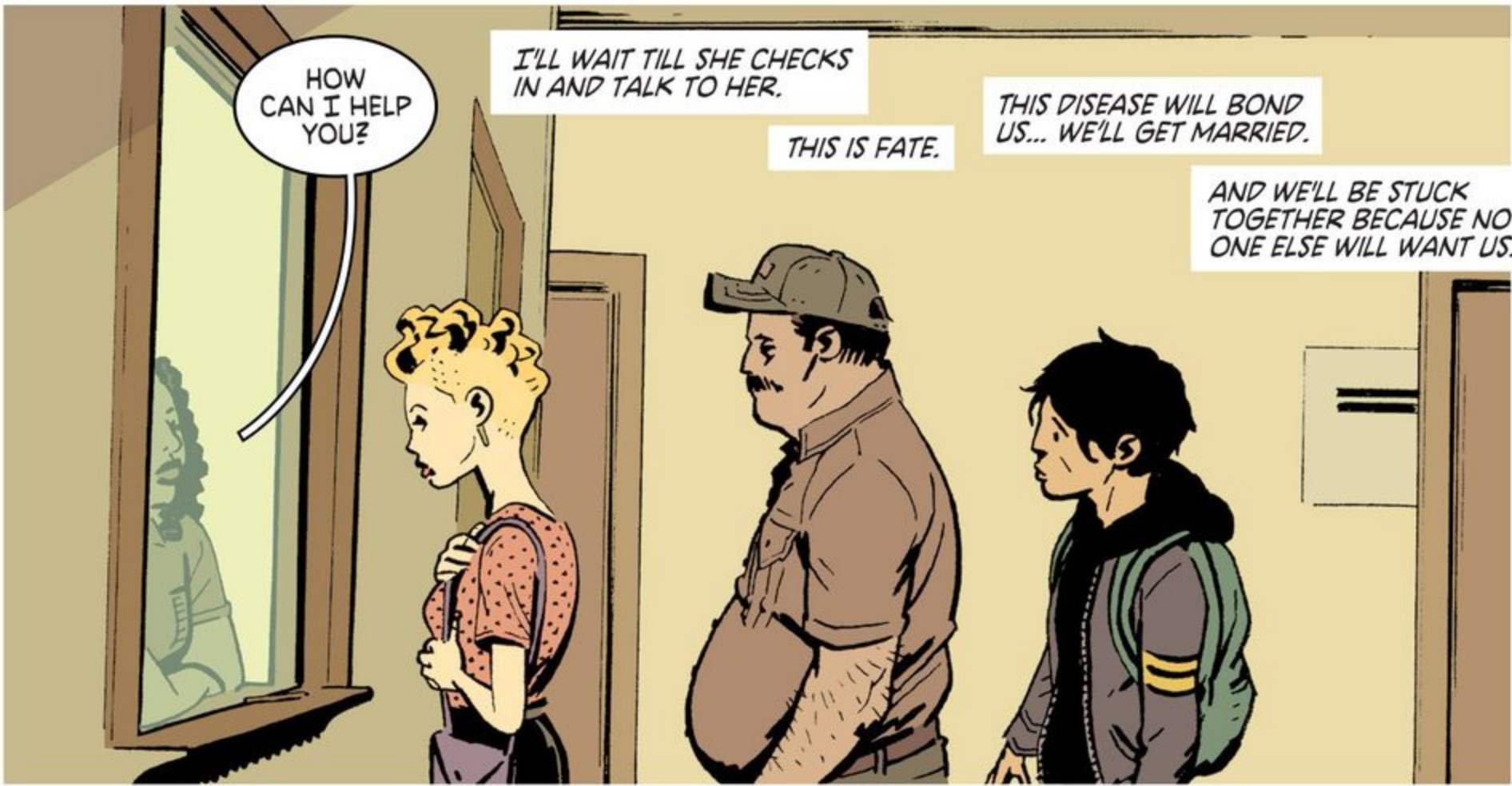
THE HERPES LEAGUE!

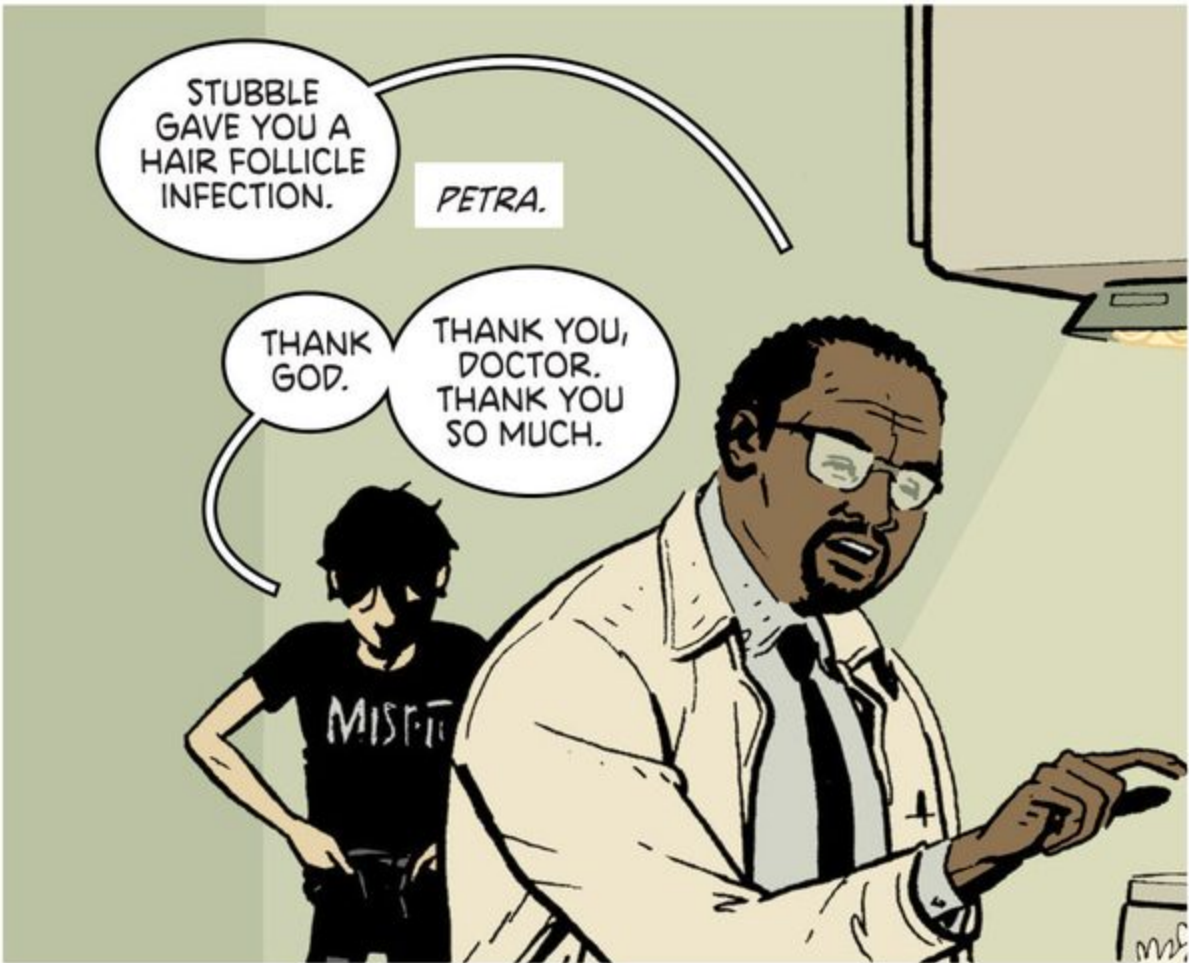
WE COULD GET MARRIED.

HAVE HERPES COVERED KIDS.

NO.

THEY MUST HAVE A WAY OF PREVENTING THAT.











WE'LL SAY IT LOUD,

BECAUSE WE'RE PROUD!

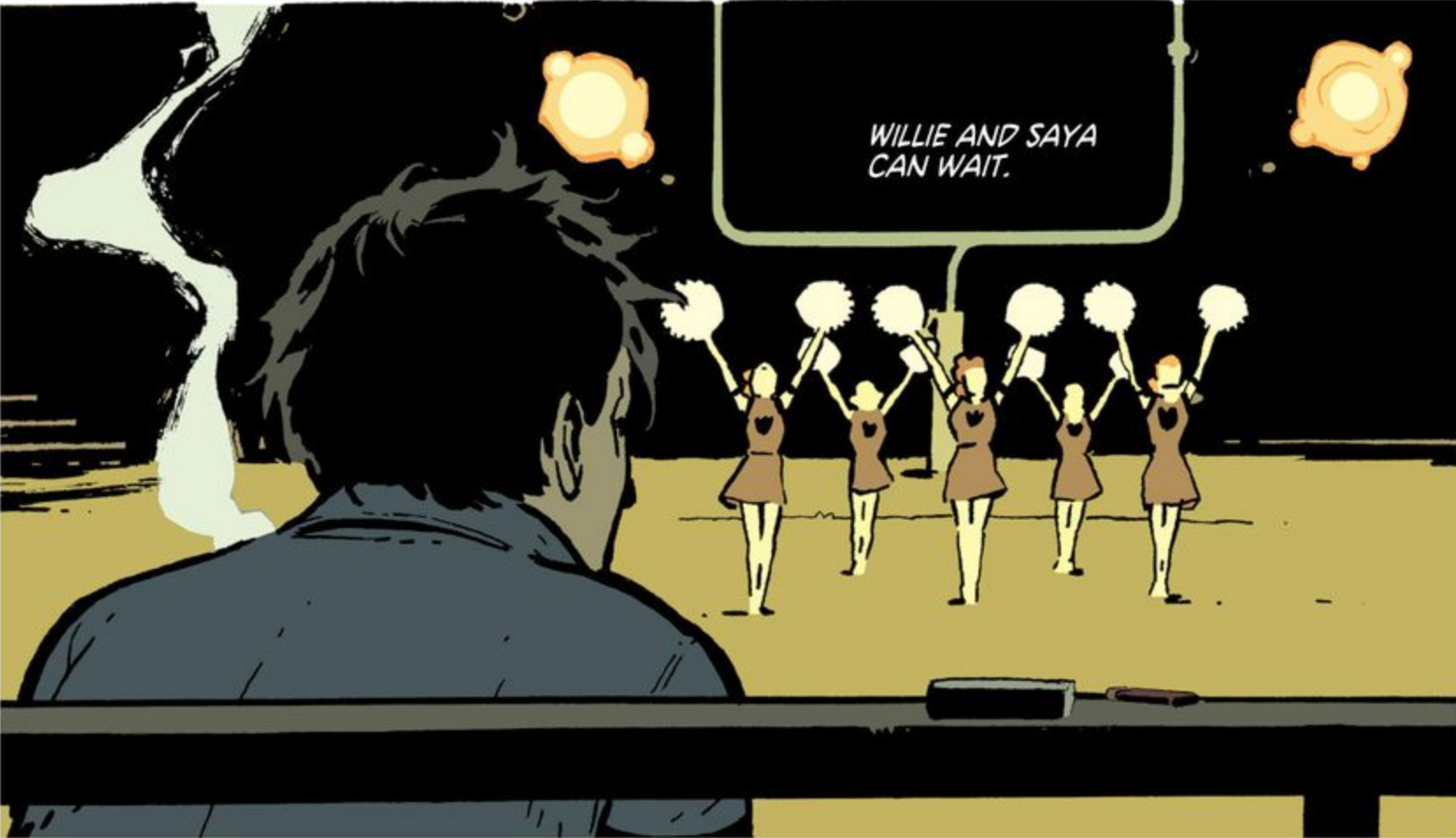
SHE'S NOT PREGNANT.

NO WAY IS GOD THAT CRUEL.

SHE WAS LYING.

TRYING TO GET BACK AT ME FOR NOT CALLING HER.

IT CAN WAIT.



WILLIE AND SAYA CAN WAIT.



VIKTOR CAN'T.



YOU HAVE BY TOMORROW MORNING TO MAKE YOUR CHOICE.

YOU KNOW YOUR FRIENDS WANT TO KILL YOU.

SHOULD BE EASY CHOICE.



TURN THEM IN. OR TURN YOURSELF IN.

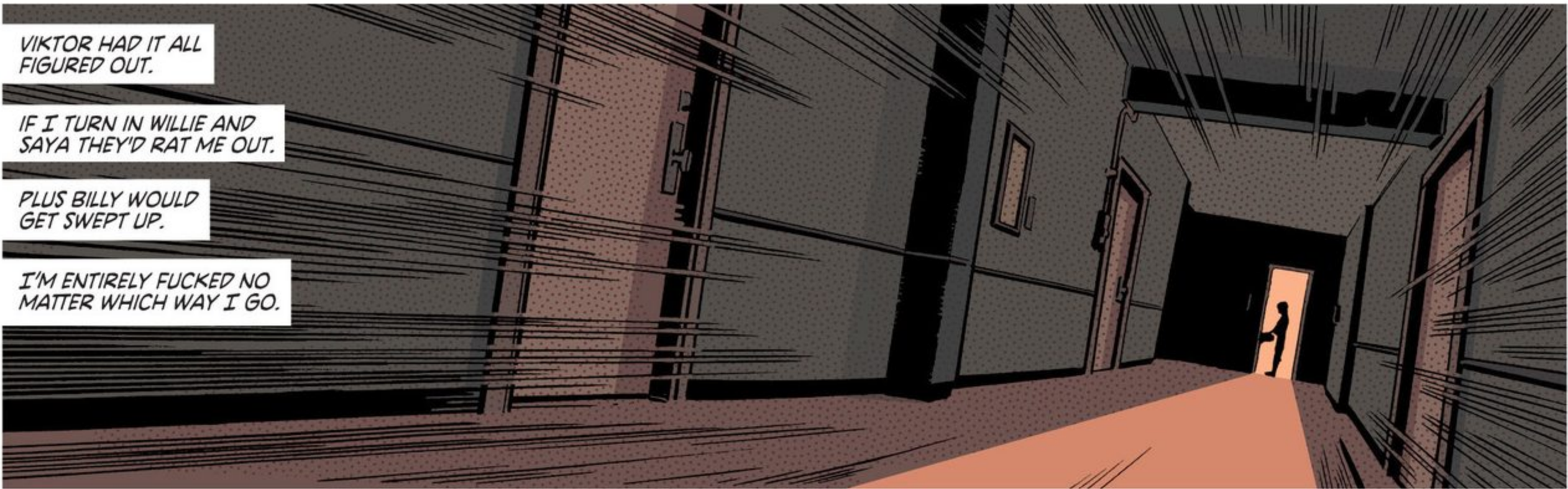
I DO NOT GIVE THE SHIT.

BUT IF YOU DO NOT CHOOSE BY THE MORNING...



...I WILL TURN YOU ALL IN.

ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF THIS.



VIKTOR HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT.

IF I TURN IN WILLIE AND SAYA THEY'D RAT ME OUT.

PLUS BILLY WOULD GET SWEEPED UP.

I'M ENTIRELY FUCKED NO MATTER WHICH WAY I GO.



GET THEM TO FORGIVE ME, OR THEY'LL KILL ME.

I CAN WIN THEM BACK.

TELL EVERYONE I LIED ABOUT WILLIE, JEALOUS ABOUT SAYA.

I'LL PAY FOR TROLL'S ABORTION.

I'LL HELP SHABNAM GET A DATE WITH HER.



EVERY PIECE OF THIS CAN BE SORTED OUT BUT ONE.



"DON'T BE BRASH."

LIKE MASTER ZANE ALWAYS SAYS, "RISK ONLY THE MANDATORY."

"PREPARATION IS EVERYTHING."



THERE'S ONE PIECE OF THIS THAT FUCKS UP ALL THE OTHERS.

ONE MANDATORY RISK.



OPTION A: RAT ON MYSELF.

OPTION B: RAT ON MY FRIENDS.

SO I'LL TAKE OPTION C--



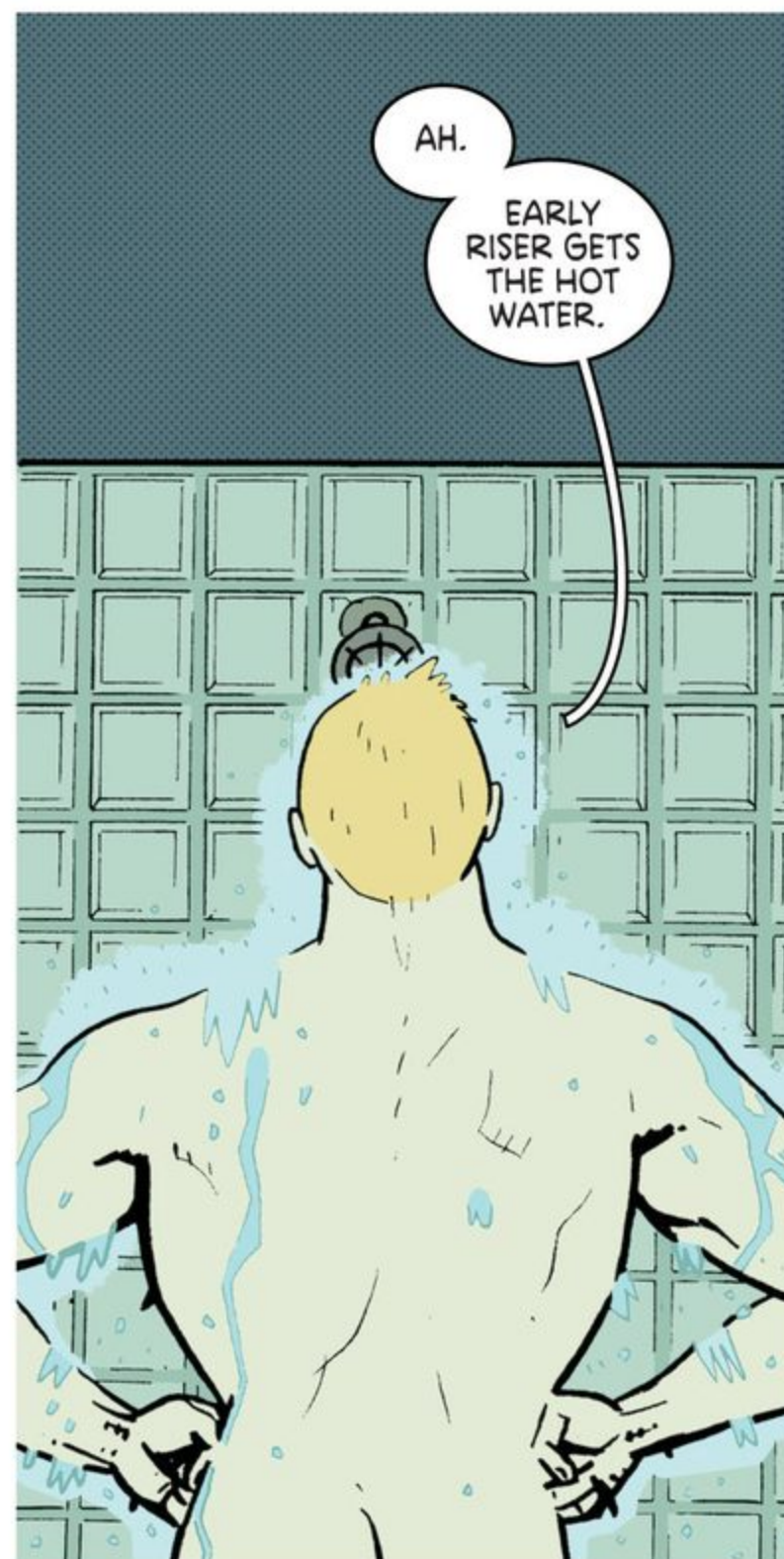
HE GOES FOR A RUN
EVERY MORNING.

THROUGH THE FAR
END OF THE GRAVEYARD.

HUFF
HUFF











--CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY.



DO IT.



WHAT IS GOING ON IN--



BOOM!



HOLY FUCK!

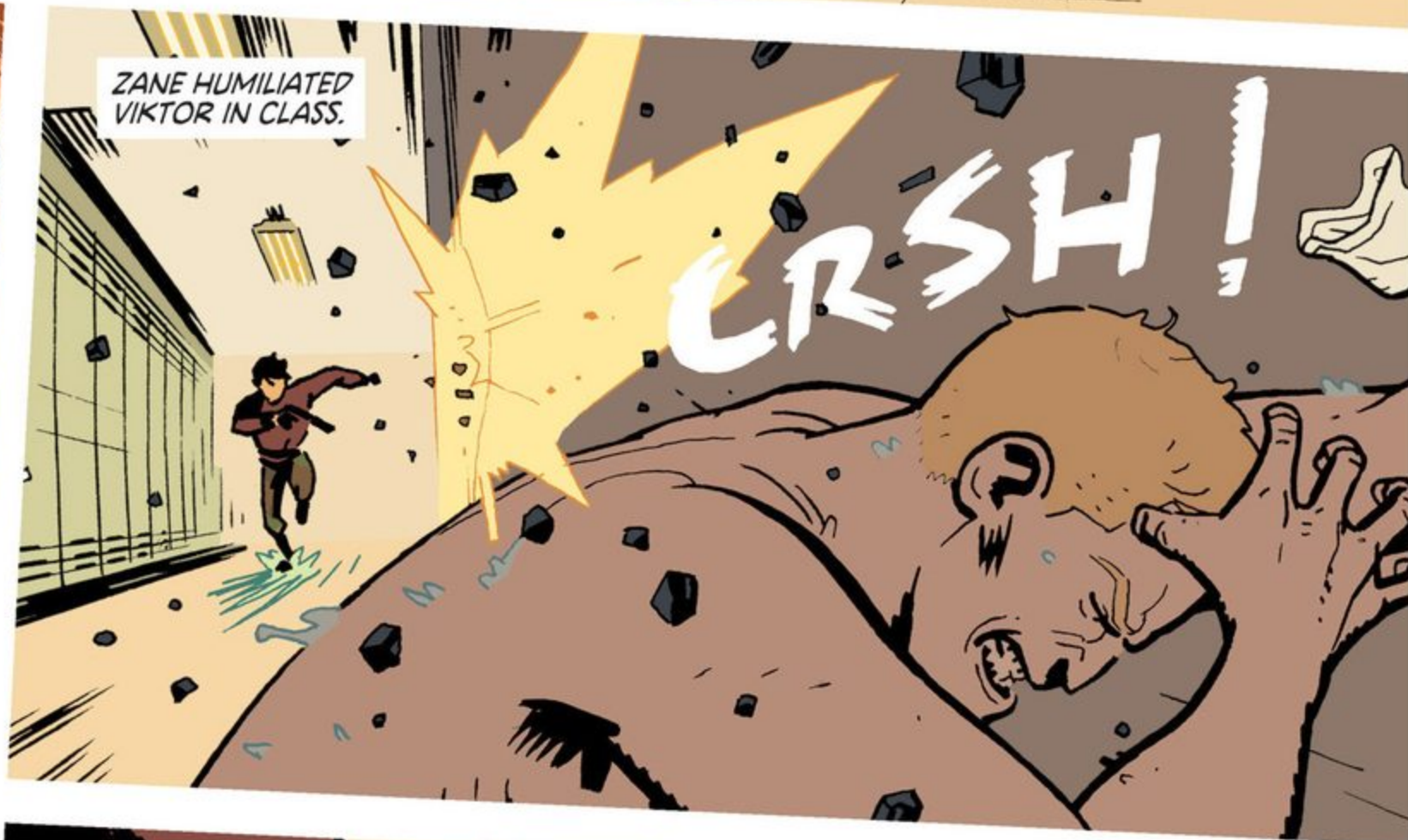


OH.



OH, FUCKKKK!

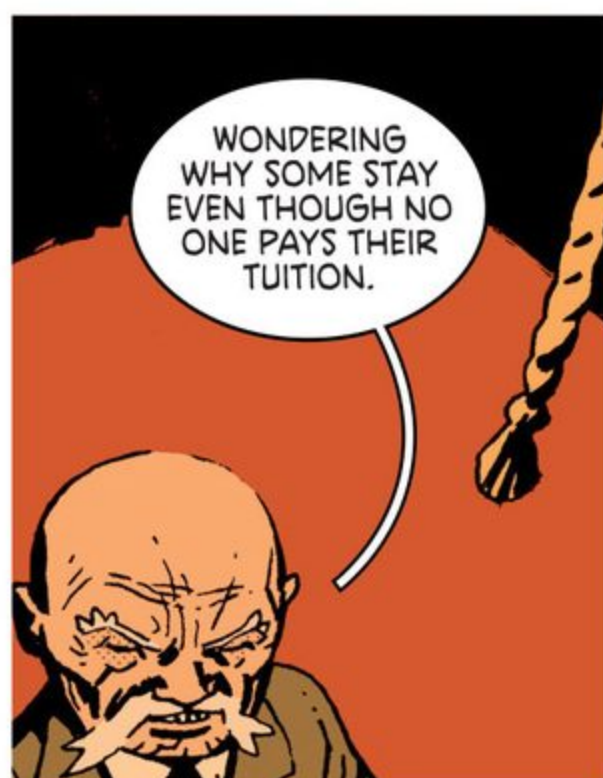


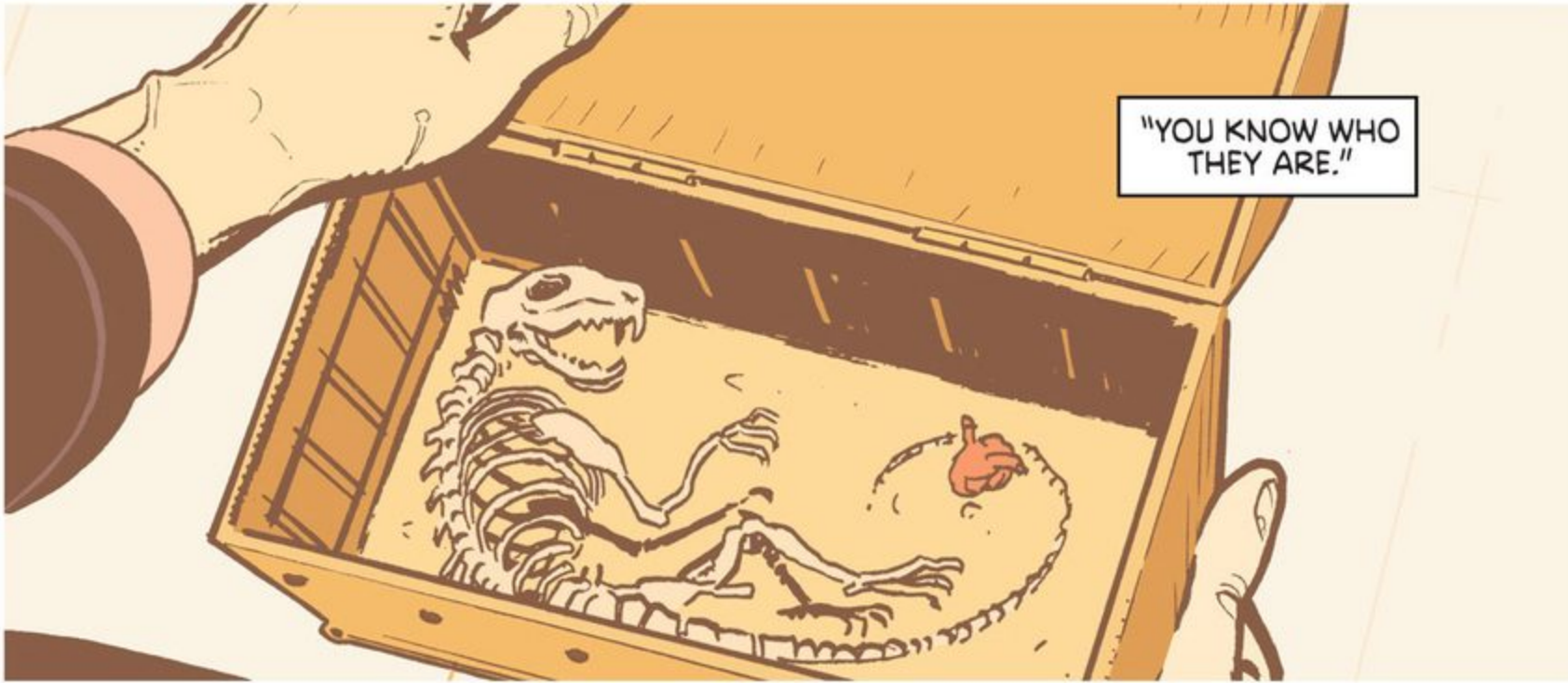




THANK YOU
BOTH FOR
GRACING
US WITH YOUR
PRESENCE.

HAVE A
SEAT.





KILL THE RATS.

DEAD LETTER OFFICE

School's out for summer! Schools out forever!

And thus begins the inevitable massacre. Of course, we'll need three months to catch up with our schedule before shipping the first chapter, but you'll wait, right? It'll be worth it I think. Don't worry; nothing bad will happen to any of the characters you love. Really.

Joining me this month in our final letters page of the season is jive monster of rocking and arting, Wesley Petraeus Montgomery Cline Craigington III. Let's get to your thoughts before we go silent for a couple months and catch our breath.

I went to an outreach school for the second half of my high school tenure. It was in a rundown section of Montreal. The kinda place they send you once they've decided to excise you from the "healthy" part of the student body. I was a skinny kid who'd mostly gotten into trouble for picking fights and skipping classes to go read Philip K. Dick in a nearby park. And suddenly I was in a school with bars on the windows. A dead-end school for dead-end kids. Kids, the system felt had failed it and everything it stood for rather than the other way around.

A lot of them came from troubled home situations or had goals that didn't exactly mesh with what most schools expected of them. Each year I went back to that place I was confronted by an almost entirely new student body. Most people had fallen off the face of the earth since I saw them last. Lost to drugs or alcohol, or worse. The teachers did their best to motivate us, informed by what seemed a laissez-faire attitude that was one part Ayn Rand, another New Age gobbledegook. They just wanted to make sure we graduated, that we had a fighting chance in a world that would thumb it's nose at you when you didn't have a high school degree.

You learned quick to stick with people, be part of the tribe. Even if you didn't really like the people you were with, it was better than having no one. You learned how to fight, at least a bit from having to keep people off you. There was usually a cop car perched around the corner from the school. A constant reminder, especially in the bleak winter when there wasn't greenery to hide it. A reminder that we were all BAD. It sucked. I graduated, but it was fucking terrible. I mean, I don't think I would be who I am today as a person, or comfortable in certain situations without the experience of surviving that place, but fuck, it really was survival.

All this to say I love this book. It gives me some catharsis, reading it and recognizing a lot of the same stresses and situations. I mean, we weren't assassins in training or even really under threat of death (Though one year after I graduated, someone did get

stabbed). But still, compared to most people I know, public school wasn't quite the same. They've got John Hughes movies to reminisce with, to remind them about prom or how great being a teen was. I don't have a school yearbook coz the motherfucker in charge of printing it ran off with the money the school gave him for the job.

So thanks to RR and WC for DEADLY CLASS. It makes me feel like a teenager again.

Ben, Montreal

WES: Hey Ben, I'm glad you're digging the series. Yeah, I'm from Montreal too, and I had a similar situation, but I was lucky enough to stay out of the school that other school's sent their castaways. Lots of my friends ended up there, though. Some of them I'm still friends with, some of them got caught up in drugs or crime and aren't with us anymore. But no matter where they came from or ended up I'd say those kids were some of the most interesting people I knew.

It was about a year ago that I rediscovered my love of comics after being away for quite some time. Little did I know that it would become an all-out passion of mine yet again after a friend recommended that I check out a series he really liked, that series of course being DEADLY CLASS. DEADLY CLASS has done a lot for me in the year I've been reading it, It's rekindled my love of the comic book medium; which has in turn led me to make more friendships in my life via this shared hobby, as well as land me a job at a comic book store.

But most importantly DEADLY CLASS has been a big help in making me feel comfortable with myself as a person. Like Marcus, I suffer from really bad anxiety and social paranoia. It's a problem that I've had for many years but finally decided to treat and take care of about a year ago. Seeing a character like Marcus and reading his narratives is almost unnervingly relate-able for me. But in a way it's also therapeutic because, like anyone with this problem, the feeling of isolation is constant in my life. Seeing ways that I've felt on a regular basis represented so beautifully in this comic has made me feel less alone. (Issue 14 was a gigantic example of this)

Thankfully, as of late, my mental outlook on life has been getting more and more positive. I had to get this letter out of me because this is something I've wanted to say since I read Issue #1 of this book: I want to thank you. Thank you for reigniting my love of comics, thank you to Wes Craig for being the fucking best artist in comics, and thank you Rick for writing a piece of work that I will always look back on fondly, for how much it helped me through a pretty unpleasant time and of course.... because

it's just damn good.

- Cheers
Daniel R. F.

WES: Hey Daniel, I'm glad you're getting so much out of the series. I feel like Marcus' journal entries and how open Rick is with some of his experiences, are two of the things readers identify with the most and make the series unique.

Rick,

I was first turned on to your work with *Uncanny X-Force* #1. I'm a HUGE lifelong X-Men fan; your runs on both *Uncanny X-Force* and *Uncanny Avengers* are pretty perfect to me. So after the first few issues of *Uncanny X-Force* I wanted to see what else you had done... well needless to say I just read DEADLY CLASS #15. I love all your Indie work, but DEADLY CLASS is just a cut above. So well put together and has such a distinct and unique voice, more than any other comic currently being released. But the reason I'm writing in is: shouldn't Marcus know better than to do drugs? Shit always goes badly for him when he does. Machine gun toting Ronald Reagan would be more than enough for me never to do anything again!

Robert

RICK: When life is as messy as Marcus's, the escape drugs offer can outweigh the occasional bad trip. And there's an aspect of Marcus that I imagine seeks chaos because that's what he's known most of his life. I don't think he's making great decisions and behind all of those poor choices that might be some self-sabotage. I'm glad you liked my mainstream stuff enough to come try out the indie work.

Hey Rick, Wes, Lee, Jordan, Rus & Sebastian,

Woohoo! Psychobilly Saya in her M3t30rs T-Shirt and I'm like "*in Heaven Everything is Fine*" I think I'm in love again those psycho chicks really know how to party!!

I first heard the Meteors in 1983, and they came to a dance hall just ten miles from where we lived the following year, I was 14 years old and man they changed my outlook on the gig scene that night. Every weekend we used to get on the train to Hammersmith and Wreck n stomp at the clubfoot to all the Psychobilly bands like King Kurt n GuanaBatz Demented r go, Batmobile, Restless, Texans and the Tall Boys n, of course, the Kings of Psychobilly The Meteors.

Through my 20s, 30s and 40s, I've stayed pure and gone to Meteors gigs. They are still playing today blasting out Psycho

Mutant rockin' tunes, OTMAPP!!

I enjoy reading your comics. Love the sci-fi stuff, but you know DEADLY CLASS is the most original comic I've read in a long time.

Michael B.

WES: Hey, thanks, Michael. I was a total rockabilly kid growing up myself, but apparently not as deep into it as you! Now I have to check out some of those bands you mentioned. My favourites were The Reverend Horton Heat and The Amazing Royal Crowns. And of course, classic Rockabilly like The Stray Cats. I'm glad you caught the reference, look for more in the future.

Hey, man, I just started DEADLY CLASS. I tore through Reagan Youth and Kids of the Black Hole. It's real fucking good. I was wondering about the thing with the thing - was the defiantly taking acid incident based on something you did.

And somewhat related: Marcus reminds me a little bit of Jeff Rosenstock. What do you think of him/Bomb the Music Industry! /related acts if you've even heard of him at all?
Patrick H.

RICK: Marcus's misadventures might be born from true events that I, or people I knew, experienced. I don't want to put too fine a point on which aspects of the story are autobiographical and which ones are fiction, but every issue has a little bit of both.

Just want to say that I really enjoy your Image series. Hope you don't mind that I buy the trades and not the monthly comics. Also, the series were already on its way, and it's difficult to get all the back issues here in Amsterdam. I believe that *Low*, *Black Science* and DEADLY CLASS are meant to be read as a book. It's mind-blowing to me that you seem always to come up with story ideas and new series.

Well, thanks for all the reading pleasure.

Hans, Amsterdam

Born in 1960, so you have readers in all ages. Have you?

RICK: So, I guess if you don't buy the single issues you won't see your letter. So whom am I responding to here, ghost of Hans?

The single issues help keep the lights on and allow us to make a living while we make enough comic books to get them into trade format. So the singles do help us a little more, but ultimately any support is greatly appreciated. The

trade money still makes a huge difference in our ability to make whatever strange comic books we feel like making. Born in 1960... hmm, so you're somewhere between Generation X and the Baby Boomers. You got to enjoy growing up in the Golden Age of cinema and music. The '70s gave birth to so much great stuff. I hold you in the highest esteem and bestow upon you credit for all things born of the '70s. You are to set out on an adventure across the great purple horizon to tell the people of what you've seen here and share your wisdom.

There's no way Marcus is gonna get killed off (OR will he?), but the narrative of the book has me thinking he will, which is good. What's interesting about the final chapter is how Master Lin is going to factor into all of this shit within the confines of 25+ pages. Billy's tuition hasn't been paid neither has Petra's. Master Lin knows about Chico....

Ten students get killed off each year...Fuck, this is fucking genius. I bet Marcus is going to get decapitated. Killing off Saya or Billy wouldn't really even be shocking. Marcus is dead for sure. The narrative picks up afterward w/ Billy and Saya. Or Maria turns out to still be alive, and Marcus has to choose. Nope, that's lame. Crazy shit, this book is. Earned its place in circulation.

Antwon Key

WES: Hey, Antwon. You've got some good guesses there. We've got some clear options for where we want things to go, but we also like to keep it open if a better idea occurs. Marcus dying? All I can say is all options are on the table...

Thank you for being one of the creators who have helped to keep me reading comic books, a hobby I have loved since my grandmother bought me an issue of *Marvel Team-Up* at the tender age of 2 back in 1977. 2 1/2 years ago my wife and I welcomed our beautiful baby girl into the world and I found myself having less time for and growing less interested in the 40-or-so Big 2 Superhero books I was reading every month. I realized I was buying books to preserve runs and not because of a true interest in the stories or execution. "*It will get better with the next creative team*," I would tell myself while complaining about Event Fatigue. I began dropping Big 2 books with the intention of wrapping up storylines and exiting the hobby, a prospect I did not like but preferred to spending \$3.99 each for books that did not appeal to me.

I didn't give much consideration to Non-Big 2 books. To my uninformed

mind, smaller press books meant inferior art and erratic publication schedules, since the latter had burned me every time I had stepped away from the Big 2 in the past. My local comic book store clerk promised me, "It's not like that anymore," so, after a few good Newsarama reviews, I decided to step out of my comfort zone.

Today, I am happy to report I love reading comics more than ever; I am just far more selective in how I "*vote with my dollar*." *Low*, *Black Science*, and DEADLY CLASS, have been 3 of the books that showed me comics can and should evolve with the readers. The Big 2 provided me great stories for a certain time in my life but in my 40s I want to read something different.

Hence, I thank you for your contributions to the hobby and wish you the best in your creator-owned endeavors. I am sure you will keep up the quality, and I am sure I will keep buying.

Best regards,

Gavin White aka Abbey's Daddy

RICK: Thanks, Gavin. It's great to hear you're enjoying the books that much. You're going to love the big cross over we have planned.

Dear Team DEADLY CLASS,

I'd like to start out by saying that I have absolutely fallen in love with this book. I just finished issue 15, and I just know that there are dark things on the horizon, and I can't wait. Also, I, like Marcus and Ronald Reagan, was born on February 6th! Fun Fact!

Anyways, I have one question here, and maybe it will be answered in the book, are Petra and Yolga the same person? They appear to be very similar, and I haven't seen them on panel at the same time, so I was just curious. Keep on putting out this spectacular book, I'm slowly converting my entire circle at college, and everyone loves it so far.

WES: Thanks! HA! Yeah, Petra and Yolga are the same person. Petra's her first name. Sorry for the confusion.

RICK: Okay, that concludes the freshman year for the class of '91. We'll be back in three months so you can see who graduates and who doesn't. Thank you all for writing in, keep the letters coming in will make sure to print them all.

Till then, remember: You're doing a great job of holding it all together.

**We love you,
Rick & Wes**

TRANSMISSIONS FROM A BASEMENT

Excited to say that the first issue of our new series TOKYO GHOST is shipping this month, cooked up with love by co-creator and art champion Sean Murphy and colors science by Matt Hollingsworth.



TOKYO GHOST follows Led Dent and Debbie Decay, two constables for the Flak entertainment conglomerate that rules the putrid squalor of the Isle of Los Angeles, 2089. The ocean levels have raised a half a mile with water so toxic it'll melt your chonies. All of society centers on distraction, everyone trying desperately to flee from the harsh reality of the noxious sewer the world has become. Led and Debbie are the law; whatever Flak Corp happens to say the law is that day.

Underneath our love letter to *Road Warrior*, *Judge Dredd*, and *13 Assassins* is an examination of our growing addiction to technology and triviality. The idea to look at our collective home opium den, the Internet, came during one of the many brainstorming sessions Sean and I've had over the past couple of years while developing this book and it's a fertile soil for commentary and examination. A look at the effect tech has had on modern society and where we are going as a civilization addicted to distraction and entertainment. Think of the social norms smart phones have changed in just six years, when was the last time you had lunch with someone, and they didn't look at their phone in the middle of a conversation? Our impulse control is gone; our attention spans are shorter, and it's only getting worse.

Now multiply exponentially as the decades pass and you have the world of TOKYO GHOST.

Equally of interest to me was the idea that just as all other addicts in our modern world depend on a codependent loved one to get by; that will surely emerge with hard-core tech heads as well. As Led slowly disappears into the net, Debbie is there, keeping him together, until she's the only thing holding him up. Her history of neglect and abandonment leads her to stay with her man, even as he begins to fade away in a virtual haze. Debbie is Led's Jiminy Cricket, on his shoulder trying to steer him right, and to serve the people as well as they can even if it puts them at odds with their marching orders.

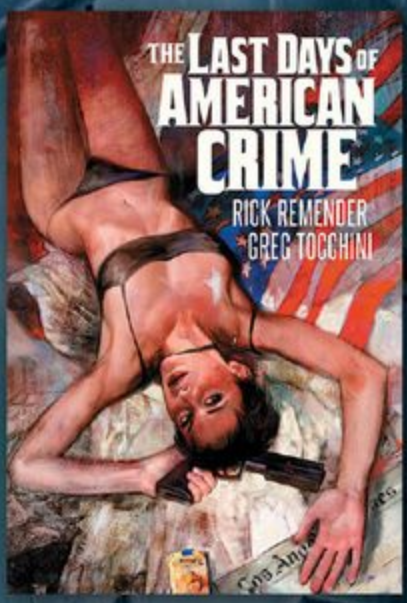
Debbie is the only person left in the isles of New Los Angeles, who is tech-free. So she's a perfect counterpoint to Led, who is a walking distraction. At any given time, he's engrossed in a dozen different reality shows and porn clips, a dozen more social network feeds, blood sports, death races, and on and on. He is the natural, exponential end that we are all facing with our phones, the Internet, and the fifteen different blogs we all run. He is dialed into it all to the point of being unaware of what he's doing, which makes him the perfect Constable for Mister Flak and his decrepit little corporation.

Grim as it all sounds, the story is guaranteed to surprise you as we follow these two damaged and confused characters to the last tech-free nation on earth: the paradisiac Garden of Tokyo.

We hope you'll pick up the first issue this month. It's twenty-eight full pages of story because we care. A lot.

In other news, we receive some wonderful retailers and fans who've put together some displays with our books! Take a look at the first batch on the next page. We'll keep accepting submissions until October 1st. The winner will receive original art from LOW, DEADLY CLASS, and BLACK SCIENCE and everyone who participates will receive a large bundle of signed comics and trades.

TTFN,
Rick



LAST DAYS OF
AMERICAN CRIME
HARDCOVER



BLACK SCIENCE
ARTIST'S PROOF
EDITION



BLACK
SCIENCE #16



LOW #9

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DEADLY CLASS

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